

REMARKS

In items 7-20 on pages 3-10 of the December 27, 2006 Office Action, the Examiner noted that claims 1-8, 11-13, 15 and 16 were pending in the application; rejected claim 15 under the second paragraph of 35 USC § 112; and rejected claims 1-8, 11-13, 15 and 16 under 35 USC § 102 as anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,738,892 to Coon et al. The rejections are traversed below.

Claim 15 has been amended in response to the rejection under the second paragraph of 35 USC § 112. Entry of this Amendment and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

A Verified English Translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 11-281957 (hereinafter, JP 11-281957) which was filed October 1, 1999 is submitted herewith. The claim of priority to JP 11-281957 was acknowledged in the Office Action mailed February 12, 2003. Coon et al. was filed on October 20, 1999. It is submitted that JP 11-281957 supports the currently pending claims and therefore, Coon et al. is not prior art. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Summary

It is submitted that the prior art cited by the Examiner does not teach or suggest the features of the present claimed invention. Thus, it is submitted that claims 1-8, 11-13, 15 and 16 are in a condition suitable for allowance. Reconsideration of the claims and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

Serial No. 09/654,527

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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